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SYNTHETIC FIBRES IN COLOMBIA*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to give a concise idea on the synthetic fibres situation at the present, expectations and economic perspective for next years.

2. COLOMBIAN SITUATION IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

With regard to the synthetic fiber production in Colombia in comparison to the other countries located in central and south America, we could say that it is in the fourth position with excellent perspective of growing, as can be seen in table 1:

TABLE 1. C.A. AND S.A. SHYNTETIC FIBERS

PRODUCTION (EXCEPT OLEFINS

COUNTRY		NON CELLULOSICS THOUSAND TON/YEAR			CELLULOSICS THOUSAND TON/YEAR		
		1.982	83	84	1.982	83	84
1. México	Y	122	132	192	14	11	15
	S	115	131	172	5	5	10
	TOT	237	263	364	19	16	25
2. Brasil	Y	116	106	161	21	18	25
	S	82	80	111	24	22	31
	TOT	198	186	272	45	40	56
3. Argentina	Y	18	24	46	2	2	10
	S	12	16	30	--	--	10
	TOT	30	40	76	2	2	20
4. Colombia	Y	26	28	45	2	2	4
	S	12	12	15	--	--	--
	TOT	38	40	60	2	2	4
5. Perú	Y	10	12	16	1	1	2
	S	29	29	33	--	--	--
	TOT	39	41	49	1	1	2
6. Venezuela	Y	8	10	12	1	1	2
	S	4	4	8	--	--	--
	TOT	12	14	20	1	1	2

Y = YARN, S = STAPLE, TOT = TOTAL

From table 1 it can be easily deduced that the greatest growth was in 1984, the main growth being for Argentina (90%), followed by Colombia (50%), Brazil (46%) and México (38%). Definitely, 1984 was "the year" of synthetic fibres for American countries.

3. TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN COLOMBIA

We can describe the year of 1984 as the most positive and growth year of the 80^{ies} for the textile industry. Respecting 1983, there was a 12% growth in textile production during 1984.

Although there still are many troubles to solve such as the big external debt (12 billion dollars), unemployment (15%), financial loans etc, there are positive signs that let us realize what expect:

To become into an industrialized country.

The three main man made fibers in Colombia worked at full capacity during 1984, and the reached 17% more production that in 1983.

In polyester, the sales grew 11%, and almost 50.000 tons were produced as yarn and staple.

Enka, the major company, raised its nylon chips production up to 8.500 ton (8% more), and also increased the polyester chips production to 16.000 tons (6% more than in 1983); the problem still is the poor installed capacity because we have to buy to México and Venezuela 14.000 tons per year of polyester chips.

In general the three man made fiber factories in Colombia are not able to produce what the local market needs, and the government does not allow to enter imports fabrics or clothes, so it is the best time for the national industry to grow as much as the market asks for. For instance, 10.000 tons of polyester staple were produced in 1984, but we still had to buy 5.000 tons to united states.

4. SYNTHETIC FIBERS PRODUCERS IN COLUMBIA

There are only 5 factories in Colombia which produce synthetic fibers for textile consumer and they cannot supply all what the market needs. See table 2:

TABLE 2. SYNTHETIC FIBERS PLANTS IN COLOMBIA

NAME	PRODUCTS	TON/YEAR
Enka de Colombia	Nylon 6 chips	8.500
	Nylon 6 tire cord	5.100
	Nylon 6 text.yarns	2.000
	Polyester chips	15.500
	Polyester yarns	10.900
	Polyester staple	5.400
Quintex (Called Celanese two years ago)	Acetate	4.000
	Nylon 6 chips	6.000
	Nylon 6 yarns	5.000
	Polyester chips	3.000
	Polyester yarns	6.400
	Polyester staple	2.000
Polimeros Colombianos	Polyester yarns	5.500
	Polyester staple	3.500
Vanylon	Nylon 6	Unknown
Zylette (Lafayette)	Polyester yarns	2.000

There are others plants which produce olefin film and olefin BCF yarns for carpets: Monofil, Ciplas, compania Nacional de Empaques and Polymer de Colombia.

In Colombia we only produce acetate, nylon 6 and polyester fibers. We have to buy to other countries: viscose, acrylic, nylon 66, etc.

5. PROJECTS

Enka and Polimeros Colombianos have quite important projects to be started in 1985.

Enka is going to expand its polyester chip plant from 15.000 ton/year up to 32.000 ton/year in order to not to have to buy it abroad.

Polimeros Colombianos will open a polyester chip plant at the end of 1986, with a capacity of 10.000 ton/year.

Also Polimeros Colombianos will expand its polyester staple plant from 4.000 ton/year up to 10.000 ton/year.

Those are the main projects.

6. CONCLUSION

The main problem in our country Colombia is that we have to expend more money (Dollars) buying imports products than the money we get from exports, and in spite of the government restrictions to imports goods we have to buy from abroad synthetic fibers that we could be producing in our country, so there should be many projects in this field and the perspectives are excellent.